5 DONOVAN LARSON

6 MR. LARSON: My name is Donovan Larson.
7 Thank you for sticking around so late. I speak to you as
8 a civil engineer practicing here in the county, a
9 resident of south county and a member of an advisory
10 group having to do with the radioactive waste that's been
11 deposited and is now being moved from the FUSRAP sites up
12 by the airport. I would like to address the source of
13 the material, the transportation of the material and the
14 destination of the material from an engineer's point of
15 view and try to point out maybe some fallacies that are
16 exhibited here.

1... 17 The concept of using the base of a mountain
18 as a repository is really a concept that doesn't make a
19 whole lot of sense. The engineers would look at this
20 kind of a solution, and I can tell you from personal
21 experience, feel very good about finding a place like a
22 mountain or a remote place like Nevada to put radioactive
23 waste. It seems like a least-damaging solution and
24 engineers are geared towards solutions. We very rarely
25 even admit that there is such a thing as a problem that
1 doesn't have a solution, especially one that an engineer
2 can't figure out. And yet, in this particular case the
3 concept of storing material in geologic time and
4 expecting it to somehow find its safest repository there
5 doesn't make a lot of sense.

6 There's a place in the Grand Canyon called --
7 as you walk down the Grand Canyon there's a spot where
8 the sedimentary rock turns into metamorphic rock and the

geologists call it the great -- I'm trying to remember the exact term -- the great non-conformity, and it's a place where about three million years worth of rock has disappeared. The rock going down to that dates down to about 200 million years and the rock below is about two billion years old and no one knows where that rock went that's in between. The radioactive waste that we're talking about will last as long as that missing rock between those two layers in the Grand Canyon.

Now, no one knows nor do they even remember -- well, no one knows where that rock went and we are placing material in the base of a mountain that, over geologic time, will be forgotten and that will become a surprise possibly to some human being or some other species millions of years from now. It's really very reasonable that that will happen. The only reason that we deal with -- that we engineers deal with the problems that we have in front of us is because they are confronting us on a daily basis. As soon as we put something out of sight like in the base of a mountain, we'll forget about it. The idea that it will somehow be written down in some record that people will be aware of two or three or four million years from now or even two or three thousand years from now is a bit ridiculous.

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Probably the best solution right now would be to leave this material in the location where it's at now and wait for a better solution to be found. The idea of transporting the material through the St. Louis area or

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even through a more uninhabited area is also full of fallacies. The idea that a train track can be made safe, that thousands of trips over a rail line can be done without a serious emergency occurring doesn't make much sense.

I'm in the water utility business and I can tell you right now there are several leaks under -- on water mains under railroad tracks in the St. Louis area as we speak. These leaks are softening the rail bed. We'll be repairing them, but there are leaks that we probably don't know about that some day may derail a train. That's just a water pipe. That's just St. Louis. These kinds of problems exist in cities everywhere across the country and they just are unavoidable, so the idea of an accident-free routing of this material through the countryside is a silly concept.

MR. BROWN: If you can wrap up in about a minute or so.

MR. LARSON: Right. And just one other point. I'm so old that I was in college at the time when nuclear power was first becoming a significant source of power, and at the time I remember in engineering class talking about the spent fuel rods and the fact that this material had to be dealt with, and of course the answer was it will be dealt with, it's just a matter of technology catching up with the need. And here we are 30 years later bailing out utility companies, simply solving the problem.

...2 Now think about this. How could the nuclear

power industry continue forward if the government couldn't find a solution to deal with the spent fuel rods? Probably the main reason why the engineers that have been hired by DOE to come up with this report -- and it's not bad. Like I say, engineers get excited about good solutions like this, but the fact is that the source of the -- I'm sorry -- that the material was created in the first place has created a need for disposal whether it's good or bad, and if something like this doesn't happen, the industry will be faced with -- the industry will be faced with acknowledging the fact that it's created a problem that it can't solve, so that's why this solution should be put off and that's why we should wait for a better solution. Thank you.